

Ethical foundations of Canada's nuclear waste management program

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Fundamental Principle of Nuclear waste fuel management

Ensure that **ALL** research, **ALL** activities, **ALL** decisions, **ALL** recommendations are framed by explicitly articulated ethical values from the beginning and at every stage of the problem resolution process

What does this require?

**The first and most important
management task?**

**To articulate the ethical values that will
frame **ALL** aspects of the nuclear waste
disposal process**

The fundament waste disposal challenge?

Building, winning, earning justified trust

Trust is grounded on ethics, the belief that those asking for one's trust will be guided in all relevant aspects of the relationship by shared ethical or moral values

**The relevant aspects of the relationship
has two key dimensions:**

(1) All decisions

**(2) All knowledge creation, generation and
assembly**

What this requires is that the pursuit of scientifically grounded solutions to the disposal issue should be guided by explicitly articulated ethical values

This is the path followed by Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Following its creation the NWMO did two things

1. It created an ethics Roundtable (2003)

- to identify the ethical standards that should guide all aspects of the operations of the NWMO
- To organize those standards into a coherent ethical and social framework

2. It undertook extensive public consultation and engagement with a view to:

- identifying the values that the public believed should guide the disposal of nuclear waste
- organizing those values into a set of objectives that the public would recognize as reflecting what was heard in the consultation process

The result:

An ethical framework constructed around a series of questions focused on both procedural and substance values

A set of eight objectives to be to guide all aspects of the decision making process:

fairness

public health and safety

worker health and safety

security

economic viability

community well-being

environmental integrity

adaptability

Examples of values relevant to procedures:

Q 1. Is the NWMO conducting its activities in a way appropriate to making public policy in a free, pluralistic and democratic society?

Q2. Are those making decisions ... impartial?

Q3. Are groups wishing to make their views known ... being provided with forms of assistance they require to present their case effectively?

Q4. Is the NWMO committed to basing its deliberations and decisions on the best science, the best aboriginal knowledge and the best ethics?

Examples of substantive values:

Q 8. Do NWMO's recommendations reflect respect for life ...?

Q 10. If implemented would NWMO's decisions be fair?

Q 11. Do the recommended provisions protect the liberty of future generations to pursue their lives as they choose not constrained by unresolved problems caused by our nuclear activities?

Specific issues:

- monitoring, remediation and, if needed, reversal
- risk reduction versus access
- permanent or interim
- lessons to be learned

Characterization of the management model:

Values based management:

A process of continuous, on-going moral reflection

Management challenge?

To build this approach into a vastly expanding and diverse organizational system and culture.

A final trust building principle based decision

NWMO committed to a “No Go” principle

If a potential receiving community said “NO!” that decision would be respected

A facility would not be placed in or near a community that did not want it.